The Status of the Claims

1.   (Currently Amended) A computer implemented method for segmenting a population, comprising:

defining a base level population segmentation tree <u>associated with a base level data set</u> having a base precision with a base segmentation tree defining module;

defining a set of alternative level variables with an alternative level variable defining module, the set of alternative level variables <u>associated with an alternative level data set and</u> useable as substitutes in the nodes of the base level population segmentation tree to create a substitute level tree having a substitute precision different from the base precision;

determining, with a substitute split value determining module, substitute split values for each node of the substitute level tree to enable up and down shifting between levels of the base precision and the substitute precision, the substitute split value determining module to calculate the substitute split values that maintain a percentage split value of the substitute level tree that is equal to a percentage split value of the base level population segmentation tree and;

outputting the substitute level tree having the substitute split values to a user.

2.   (Original) A method according to claim 1, further including determining whether a level shift is required.

3.   (Original) A method according to claim 2, further including determining segments using the base level tree when no level shift is required.

4.   (Original) A method according to claim 2, further including determining segments using another level when a level shift is required.

5.   (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1, wherein up and down shifting between levels of ~~different~~ <u>the base</u> precision <u>and the substitute precision</u> comprises determining at least one segment using the substitute level tree.

6.   (Canceled)

7.   (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein the split values are for income and age.

8.   (Original) A method according to claim 1, further including verifying the results of a segment determination when using substitute values.

9.   (Currently Amended) A system for segmenting a population, comprising:

means for defining a base level population segmentation tree having a base level data set with a base precision, the base level population segmentation tree comprising a percentage split value in each node;

means for defining a set of alternative level variables associated with an alternate level data set and useable as substitutes in the nodes of the base level population segmentation tree to create a substitute level tree having a substitute precision different from the base precision; and

means for determining substitute split values for each node of the substitute level tree to enable up and down shifting between levels of the base precision and the substitute precision, the substitute split values calculated to maintain a percentage split value for each node of the substitute level tree that is equal to the percentage split value in each corresponding node of the base level population segmentation tree.

10.   (Original) A system according to claim 9, further including determining whether a level shift is required.

11.   (Original) A system according to claim 10, further including determining segments using the base level tree when no level shift is required.

12.   (Original) A system according to claim 10, further including determining segments using another level when a level shift is required.

13.   (Currently Amended) A system according to claim 9, wherein up and down shifting between levels of different the base precision and the substitute precision comprises determining at least one segment using the substitute level tree.

14.   (Canceled)

15.   (Original) A system according to claim 9, wherein the split values are for income and age.

16.   (Original) A system according to claim 9, further including means for verifying the results of a segment determination when using substitute values.

17.   (Currently Amended) A software system to execute on a computer system for segmenting a population, comprising:

a base segmentation tree defining module for defining a base level population segmentation tree associated with a base level data set having a base precision;

an alternative level variable defining module for defining a set of alternative level variables associated with an alternative level data set and useable as substitutes in the nodes of the base level population segmentation tree to create a substitute level tree having a substitute precision different from the base precision; and

a substitute split value determining module for determining substitute split values for each node of the tree to enable up and down shifting between levels of the base precision and the substitute precision, the substitute split value determining module to calculate the substitute split values that maintain a percentage split value of the substitute level tree that is equal to a percentage split value of the base segmentation tree.

18.   (Original) A software system according to claim 17, further including determining whether a level shift is required.

19.   (Original) A software system according to claim 18, further including determining segments using the base level tree when no level shift is required.

20.   (Original) A software system according to claim 18, further including determining segments using another level when a level shift is required.

21.   (Currently Amended) A software system according to claim 17, wherein up and down shifting between levels of ~~different~~ the base precision and the substitute precision comprises determining at least one segment using the substitute level tree.

22.   (Canceled)

23.   (Original) A software system according to claim 17, wherein the split values are for income and age.

24.   (Original) A software system according to claim 17, further including a module for verifying the results of a segment determination when using substitute values.

25.   (Currently Amended) A machine accessible medium having instructions stored thereon that, when executed, cause a machine to:
        define a base level population segmentation tree associated with a base level data set having a base precision;
        define a set of alternative level variables associated with an alternative level data set and useable as substitutes in the nodes of the base level population segmentation tree to create a substitute level tree having a substitute precision; and
        determine substitute split values for each node of the tree to enable up and down shifting between levels of the base precision and the substitute precision by calculating the substitute split values to maintain a percentage split value of the substitute level tree that is equal to a percentage split value of the base level population segmentation tree.

26.   (Previously Presented) A machine accessible medium as defined in claim 25 having instructions stored thereon that, when executed, cause the machine to determine whether a level shift is required.

27.   (Previously Presented) A machine accessible medium as defined in claim 26 having instructions stored thereon that, when executed, cause the machine to determine segments using the base level tree when no level shift is required.

28.   (Previously Presented) A machine accessible medium as defined in claim 26 having instructions stored thereon that, when executed, cause the machine to determine segments using another level when a level shift is required.

29.   (Currently Amended) A machine accessible medium as defined in claim 25 having instructions stored thereon that, when executed, cause the machine to enable up and down shifting between levels of ~~different~~ the base precision and the substitute precision by determining at least one segment using the substitute level tree.

30.   (Canceled)

31.   (Previously Presented) A machine accessible medium as defined in claim 25, wherein the split values are for income and age.

32.   (Previously Presented) A machine accessible medium as defined in claim 25 having instructions stored thereon that, when executed, cause the machine to verify the results of a segment determination when using substitute values.

33.   (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 1, wherein the base level population segmentation tree is based on at least one of demographic data or behavioral data for a set of consumers.

34.   (Previously Presented) A system according to claim 9, wherein the base level population segmentation tree is based on at least one of demographic data or behavioral data for a set of consumers.

35.   (Previously Presented) A software system according to claim 17, wherein the base level population segmentation tree is based on at least one of demographic data or behavioral data for a set of consumers.

36.   (Previously Presented) A machine accessible medium as defined in claim 25, wherein the base level population segmentation tree is based on at least one of demographic data or behavioral data for a set of consumers.

37.   (Previously Presented) A computer implemented method to segment a population comprising:

receiving, in a computer system, a base level data set having a first precision;

defining a first segmentation tree in accordance with the base level data set, the first segmentation tree comprising a plurality of base level variables, each variable associated with a base level node and having a corresponding base level value;

receiving, in the computer system, an alternate data set having a second precision different from the first precision of the base level data set;

defining a plurality of alternate level variables, each alternate level variable associated with an alternate level node and having a corresponding alternate level value to facilitate at least one of upshifting or downshifting relative to the base level data set; and

defining a second segmentation tree in accordance with the alternate data set, the second segmentation tree comprising the plurality of alternate level variables and corresponding alternate level values representative of the population.

38.   (Canceled)

39.   (Previously Presented) A method as defined in claim 37, wherein defining the plurality of alternate level variables further comprises calculating the corresponding alternate level value to maintain a similar percentage split between the base level node and the alternate level node.

40.   (Currently Amended) A computer implemented method to segment a population comprising:

receiving, in a computer system, a base level data set having a first precision;

defining a segmentation tree in accordance with the base level data set, the segmentation tree having a plurality of decision nodes, each comprising a base level variable and a base level value;

calculating a percentage split for each of the plurality of decision nodes of the segmentation tree, wherein the percentage split is calculated at the corresponding base level value for the corresponding base level variable;

receiving, in the computer system, an alternate level data set having a second precision;

selecting an alternate level variable from the alternate level data set for each of the plurality of decision nodes of the segmentation tree, the alternate level variable selected in association with a relative similarity to the base level variable;

calculating an alternate level value of the alternate level variable for each of the plurality of decision nodes, where the alternate level value is calculated to maintain the percentage split for each of the plurality of corresponding decision nodes and;

outputting an alternate level segmentation tree ~~to a user~~, the alternate level segmentation tree representative of the population associated with the alternate level data set.

41.   (Previously Presented) A method as defined in claim 40, further comprising upshifting from the base level data set to the alternate level data set when the alternate level data set is more precise than the base level data set.

42.   (Previously Presented) A method as defined in claim 40, further comprising downshifting from the base level data set to the alternate level data set when the alternate level data set is less precise than the base level data set.